

## **CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER**

*From June 29 to August 1, 2007, Congressman Joe Courtney asked members of the Suffield community to share their opinion on changing the name of the local post office to honor Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, United States Marine Corps - a Suffield native who was killed by enemy fire in Fallujah, Iraq on May 4, 2006.*

*During that period, Congressman Courtney's office received over 170 letters, calls and emails in overwhelming support of the idea. Below are excerpts from the responses he received.*

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“Being the very proud and saddened grandmother of Cpl. Stephen R. Bixler, renaming the Suffield Post Office in his honor would be a special tribute, keeping his memory alive for all who knew, loved, and respected him. He gave his life to secure our freedom.”

Cpl. Bixler's Grandmother

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“Stephen Bixler was a close friend of mine, in which I served with during Operation Iraqi Freedom with 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Marines. During this period, Stephen showed what it meant to be a Marine through his hard work and dedication to the Marine Corps and in making the quality of living for the Iraqi people better. From when he was a Boy Scout, Stephen went out of his way to provide service to others. Being part of the Boy Scouts, Stephen was able to excel in all that he did leading him to Earn Eagle Scout. Stephen decided to serve his country and protect others by joining the United States Marine Corps. In the Marine Corps, Stephen utilized his outstanding qualities of selflessness, determination, and dedication to the job at hand. Stephen strived to be the best at everything that he did. When 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Marines returned state-side, Stephen volunteered to return with 2<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion for a second tour of duty in Iraq. He successfully completed his first of many schools when 2<sup>nd</sup> Recon Battalion asked for volunteers to leave to go back to Iraq. Stephen jumped at the opportunity and did it courageously. Before Stephen left, he told me that he did not think that he would make it back this time. Stephen went to many schools in Suffield, Connecticut when he was home and loved to talk to the students about his experiences. Stephen went on the deployment and lost his life in Fallujah, Iraq doing what he loved.

“During the time I knew Stephen, I saw that he was a courageous and selfless individual by his actions. He changed the life of everyone whom he came in contact with. His service in the Marine Corps and in Boy Scouts made a lasting impression on Suffield, Connecticut residents, and on to all those who knew him. Stephen's loss has deeply impacted his family and those who had the pleasure of voting for him.”

A fellow marine who served with Cpl. Bixler

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“Stephen gave his life selflessly while serving his second tour of duty in Fallujah, Iraq on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Stephen served our country proudly knowing that the risk to himself was of the highest level and yet he went straight for the front lines. It is important to note that Stephen was given the Medal of Valour for his final act which saved the lives of his fellow marines traveling through a desperate area of the Al Anbar province. It was Stephen who noticed the danger along the route and who stopped his caravan to investigate and mitigate the danger.

“Stephen was a valuable member of our community as a young person who was always willing to give of himself as a Boy Scout (Eagle Scout Rank), a member of the St Joseph’s Church, and as a friend who was willing to volunteer to help whenever the opportunity arose.

“Stephen’s willingness to help his community was not limited to Suffield, CT. His devotion to the Marines was Stephen’s way to serve our country on behalf of us all.

“Just before he returned to Iraq for his second tour of duty, I asked Stephen why he felt he needed to return. His response was simple. He said that the Iraqi people needed his help. He told me that after a few days of the Marine presence in the small towns of the Anbar Province that children returned to play and that people were back at work in the shadow of security provided by Steve and his fellow marines. Steve was humble in his view of his profound work.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Stephen Bixler was a close friend to both my husband and I, whom my husband served with during Operation Iraqi III 04-06. I had the privilege of knowing Stephen outside the United States Marine Corps. Stephen was a hard working, dedicated and thoughtful individual. He always thought of others before throwing himself into the mix. His family and friends always came first. He exemplified what it meant to be a great friend, a great Marine, and a great leader. I only know the stories from Iraq either from my husband or his brother. They talked nothing of greatness and leadership. Stephen knew what he was doing, loved what he was doing and was passionate about being a Marine. Stephen became like a brother to me. Staying at our house and helping my husband out when something needed to be fixed. He was never afraid to get his hands dirty. He always came with a smile and left with one. His attitude was always positive even on those tough days at work.

“Knowing Stephen made me a better person today. There is not a day that goes by that I do not walk past the pictures we have hanging in his memory or a night that I fall asleep that I am not thinking of him. He was a loved individual with so much to offer. His loss will always leave a lasting impression not only in Suffield but everyone that he reached out to.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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Stephen Bixler was a close friend of both my brother and I, whom my brother served with during Operation Iraqi Freedom III 04-06. I also had the privilege of serving with Stephen Bixler in Camp Fallujah during this deployment. During this period, Stephen exemplified what it meant to be a Marine and a citizen soldier through his hard work and dedication to helping to improve the standard of living for numerous Iraqi families.”  
“During the short time that I knew Stephen, I learned that he was a caring and selfless individual by his actions. His life impacted those he came in contact with, extending beyond his friends and family. His service to others made a lasting impression not only on Suffield, Connecticut residents, but it extended to the citizens of Iraq and fellow service members within the armed forces. Stephen’s loss has deeply impacted those that knew him and his family.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“We knew him as a wonderful friend, student, track teammate, and overall outstanding citizen. Please help facilitate this honor to his memory.”

Friends of the Bixler Family

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“A unique way of remembering our own and the tremendous price families pay for something others may take so lightly”

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“Steve was an exceptional young man that my wife and I knew well. He attended our church and was an altar boy. His dream was always to be a Marine and he gave his life in the service of his country doing what he wanted to do. We have shared many moments with his mom and dad, Linda and Richard, grieving over the loss of someone so young.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“In my opinion, there would be no better way to honor both Stephen and his family than by renaming the Post Office. Stephen is a hero, and I believe this is the very least he deserves for the sacrifice that he has made for his country. It is now our turn to repay our respect and honor by renaming the Suffield Post Office in Cpl. Bixler’s name.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“My senior year I attained a car for the first time and I would drive Steve to practice and home at the end of the day. We got along great, we could always make each other laugh

at the littlest things and others on the tram would laugh with us. We used to hang out so much the athletic director didn't realize I was two years older than Steve. I had a great time with him and I will truly miss him. Steve was a great student and enjoyed by everyone, he was a talented young man."

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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"Stephen Bixler was one of my older brother's closest friends. They ran cross-country and track together in high school and I remember always going to the meets and watching them compete. Steve was quite possibly one of the nicest guys on the team, if not the entire high school. Stephen entering the Marines and defending his country was something he felt passionately about. I support your idea to rename the Post Office in memory and honor of Stephen Bixler. What he did for our country may not be known to many people throughout the country, but it is widely known throughout our town and I believe that this renaming would be an honor in his family's eyes."

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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"Stephen graduated from Suffield High School in 2003, two years after our son and one year before our daughter. He and our son Jon were good friends, having competed together in Cross Country and Track & Field at Suffield High. During the years that Jon had his license, and Steve was still too young, Steve was the one exclusive passenger who was picked up each morning on the way to school and returned home each evening after a meet or practice. The two of them, and the old truck they rode in back and forth to school, were men on a mission who could only be deterred by the chance to do "donuts" in an empty high school parking lot with a fresh covering of snow!

"During the summer, they were part of a small group on the Cross Country team who attended running camp in Vermont. They always enjoyed entertaining us with the stories they brought home about the camp antics and the occasional practical jokes."

"Steve was a model student, with a warm personality and a great sense of humor. He was also quiet and serious with a great respect for his family and country. All during high school, Steve's friends knew his first dream was to be a U.S. Marine. When many of his friends left for the "footloose" life of being new college students, Steve left for the most difficult job- Marine training. As a marine, Steve's assignments throughout the world had one cause and that was to assist people in need. Steve was a young man that any parent would be honored to have as a son."

Parents of one of Bixler's close friends

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"The Iraq war is not a subject that comes and goes- it is always on the air. Its everlasting presence reminds me of Stephen Bixler- in my studies, watching the news, even conducting research at work.

“Naming the post office after Steve would not just be an honor to Steve but also a gift to the people of Suffield. Though we can never bring Steve back, and no building can compensate for his death, feeling like we have paid tribute to Steve is a necessary part of the community’s healing.”

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“I graduated High School with Stephen Bixler and considered him a friend. I remember going to Stephen’s house to play when I was very young and I remember riding the bus with him for as long as I can remember. For all of my years as a student in Suffield, I can remember Stephen’s house was always extensively decorated by his mother. When these decorations went from hoping for his return, to mourning his loss, the effect was well felt throughout the community in the deepest, most heartfelt way. Stephen was well liked and greatly respected, and will forever be appreciated. As long as Stephen’s family supports the honor then I believe nothing should stand in the way of this.”

Classmate and friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Stephen was my cousin. He lost his life fighting for us in Iraq. Stephen loved what he did, being a Marine. He lost his life doing what he loved. Growing up, Stephen emulated the “All American Kid”. An athlete, a scholar and Eagle Scout. He defined what all Marines should strive to be. Aside from all these things, Stephen was a son, a brother, and a friend to many. He has made out family proud, and any one who knew him. Anyone who didn’t know him missed out on a wonderful person.”

Cousin of Cpl. Bixler

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“As a former classmate and teammate of Corporal Stephen R. Bixler, I can attest to his deserving the honor of the Suffield Post Office name. Steve was a valued member of every team, class, and organization that he participated in. He was always there to encourage creativity, determination, and strength in the people around him. Steve lived his dream by joining the Marines. He seemed to have found a home in his service. As a Marine, he was able to stand out from the crowd, just as he did as an athlete and intellectual. Steve deserves this honor because he gave his life for his country. Steve deserves this honor because he was one of America’s finest soldiers. However, Steve mostly deserves this honor because of who he was as a person. He was kind and sought out the best in those around him. He was an inspiration to everyone and that is why the Suffield Post Office should be named the Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office.”

Classmate of Cpl. Bixler

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“In today’s world, Cpl. Stephen R. Bixler was one of the very finest- loyal to his god, family, friends and country.”

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“I had the honor of growing up and developing a great friendship with Stephen Bixler. The tragic death of my friend Steve was a devastating loss and shook not only those who knew him, but the whole Suffield community. As a longtime friend of Steve’s, I can not put into words the type of person Steve was. He was hardworking, respectful, honest, ambitious, and a true patriot. Steve had wonderful friends and family who loved him very much. While Steve could have gone to college and pursued other career opportunities, he chose to join the US Marines. Steve felt a sense of duty to protect the community and county he so dearly loved. This community and country is forever in debt to Steve for laying down his life for the freedom we all enjoy. Steve is a true hero in every sense of the word and his display of bravery, commitment, and selflessness makes him a role model for us all. Steve Bixler’s sacrifice shows that a single man, even from a small town like Suffield, can make a positive impact across the world and inspire future generations to follow his example.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“I watched Steve grow up, from his years as a member of a middle school Odyssey of the Mind team, through high school track meets, and as a Marine. After meeting his parents through his activities, it was easy to see how he became such a fine, honorable, young man. The entire Bixler family is well known for their Suffield volunteer activities, and with Rich Baxter as a USPS employee, this would e a fitting tribute.”

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“I was a member of the Suffield High School track team with Steve. His quiet leadership, dedicated work ethic, and exemplary sportsmanship were admired by many. More importantly, he was a trustworthy friend. His companionship was an integral component of the solidarity of the team, and one that I missed greatly when I graduated. It would be a wonderful token of my town and country’s indebtedness to Steve to name the Suffield Post Office in his memory.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“His heroic death has had a profound impact on our community and this would be a small but very meaningful way to remember Stephen and the price he paid for our community.”

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“Our grandson and Stephen were the best of friends from Nursery School through High School. Stephen joined the Marines and Ross went off to college in Maryland. When Stephen was laid to rest in Arlington, Ross went down to attend the ceremony and say one last goodbye to his friend.”

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“I got to know Stephen though high school track, as he was a teammate of my daughters. He was a tough competitor while being respectful to his teammates and opponents.”

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“It’s a fitting tribute, given the fact that Stephen was raised just up the street from the post office, spent his entire life in this town, was an Eagle Scout, and ended up giving his life for his country.”

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“My Advanced Placement English teacher, Mr. Allen Hoffacker, knew Cpl. Bixler very well and invited him into my English class. I found it admirable that Cpl. Bixler, on his own short break from the war, prioritized our class (of 11<sup>th</sup> graders of whom he did not know) over all of his other personal activities and relaxation. One could notice immediately that Cpl. Bixler was a man of great integrity. During our class period, he openly accepted all of our questions and spoke of some of his experiences in the war. His stories deserve to be remembered and repeated.

“Shortly after our class visit, Cpl. Bixler was killed in Iraq. Immediately, our community commemorated our fallen hero. At a school ceremony in honor of Cpl. Bixler, all students and staff gathered in front of the school’s entrance while a plaque was dedicated in his memory. The absolute silence of so many in attendance made it clear that all were touched by his life and sacrifice. Personally, I remembered images of Cpl. Bixler, standing in front of me only weeks earlier. It was difficult to grasp that this man who I had just seen alive and well, had passed from this world and into the next.”

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“Stephen was a fine young man who bravely served his country and I believe that we should honor his service and his ultimate sacrifice of his life by renaming the Suffield Post Office in his honor.”

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“He was a Marine heart and soul. A great pride and joy to his family and friends. I was a great aunt to him.”

Patricia Perry, Relative of Cpl. Bixler

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“Stephen was my cousin and as you know he lost his life fighting for our freedom in Iraq. Stephen died doing what he loved best, being a Marine. I could not think of a better person to pay tribute to. He was the ultimate Marine and a fine young man. He possessed all the characteristics of the “All American Boy”. Before the Marines, Stephen excelled at everything he did. He was a wonderful student, an athlete, and an Eagle Scout. Stephen was a son, a brother, and of course, a friend. He was someone that would make any family proud. He accomplished more things in his short life than most people can only hope to do. Everyone who knew Stephen loved him and anyone who didn’t know him really missed out.”



Cousin of Cpl. Bixler

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“My son served with Bixler in the US Marines. When Bixler returned for his 3<sup>rd</sup> tour, my son did not. Bixler did not return from Iraq.

“Having the Suffield Post Office named after Bixler would be an honor.”

Mother of three Marines who all served in the Iraq conflict

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“Both of my brothers were close friends of Stephen and have worked hard to insure that Stephen’s memory live on in the hearts of those who knew him as well as those who were not blessed to have know him. However, renaming the post office after Stephen would be a lasting tribute that would forever remind the residents of Suffield of Stephen’s sacrifice and hopefully make them appreciate their freedoms just a little more each time they see his name on the building. Stephen made the ultimate sacrifice for us. I feel that the *least* we can do is rename the post office in his honor.”

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“I had the pleasure of teaching Stephen Bixler when he was a student at SHS. I feel strongly that honoring Steve by naming the post office after him is a necessary and honorable thing to do.”

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“Stephen was as humble as he was, would be very proud of this honor. Suffield was the home he treasured. As an award winning track star he ran in the streets and roadways of Suffield and as an Eagle Scout he contributed his time and hard work in many projects. Given the fact that Richard, Stephens father who has been an employee of the U.S. Postal Service his entire working career, this would be a touching an incredible honor for this very humble family.”

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“As a serving member, and proud former resident of Suffield, CT, I wholeheartedly support renaming the Suffield Post Office in order to honor the memory of Stephen Bixler. Bixler had the courage to represent our town and country while serving with the Marine Corps and gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect freedoms that many people take for granted. Cpl. Bixler brought honor to his family and town through his actions and demonstrated the best of what Suffield residents are.”

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“To speak for a moment on Steve’s character, Steve and I went to High School together, and spent considerable amounts of time together as teammates on the Varsity Track team. Steve was a good athlete, funny, smart, and genuinely nice. As one of the team captains at the time, I can remember his strong team spirit and dedication at each and every meet.



He was the kind of person that never isolated individuals, but instead brought those around him closer together by setting a good example for us all to follow.

“Suffield is such a small, tightly knit town that almost every time a name is mentioned, you recognize the name based on familiar connection. This is why I believe renaming the post office will have a greater impact in Suffield than it would in many other towns, and will therefore be a greater honor. There is truly no way we can repay Steve for his sacrifice, however naming the Post Office after him will help make the memory of him a permanent imprint on the minds of the present and future residents of Suffield.”

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“I attended high school with Stephen and ran indoor track with him my freshman year. He was one of the most admirable persons I have ever had the honor of meeting and I truly believe it is most appropriate to name the Post Office building in dedication of this brave and patriotic young man who selflessly laid down his life to protect our freedom and democracy.”

Friend, classmate and teammate of Cpl. Bixler

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“The renaming of the Suffield Post Office would be a small but great action. Steve was an incredible student. I will never forget his kindness and determination.”

Teacher at Suffield High School

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“I went to high school with Steve, and was lucky enough to have become friends with him. Steve was an amazing person, he had a big heart and an even bigger smile. He was caring, compassionate, and one of the most genuine people I have ever met. I don’t think you will come across a single person who knew Steve, that won’t approve of the post office being changed to honor him.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“I went to high school and was track teammates with Stephen Bixler, and it was to say the least an honor knowing him. He had a huge heart, and was willing to help anyone. Because of knowing him, and how strong he was, I have been able to overcome my own personal medical hardship and inspire others by getting back on my feet literally and back to the sport we both loved. This is probably not a good enough reason to rename the Post Office after him, but I feel it is important to keep in mind because it comes to show that good deeds and respectful treatment of others does pay off in the end, even if its after passing.

“Steve was young, and gave so much, for his peers, his town, state, and nation. Honoring his family with the renaming of the post office is the least we can do to thank his entire

family for the work Stephen put forth right to the end. In addition, the renaming will benefit the town as a whole, for what it will symbolize.

“The town of Suffield has really come together in grieving the loss of Cpl. Bixler, shown forth in small ceremonies such as the welcoming back/parade as people lined Bridge Street when his body was brought back home, and the annual picnic in his memory which was started this year.

“His name will live on, and every time anyone uses that post office, or passes by it, they will remember the story about how the town came together to comfort a mourning family and pay their respects for a fallen young hero.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Corporal Stephen R. Bixler was a very close friend of mine. We went too high school together and I was his captain on the track team for two years. Not a day goes by where I don’t think of him. In making the ultimate sacrifice for his country, he also made the ultimate sacrifice for his hometown of Suffield, Connecticut- a town where he was a role model to everyone around him, of all ages.”

“The town of Suffield is forever in debt to Steve, and I feel the very least the town can do is rename the Suffield Post Office in his memory. It would be a great tribute to a great guy. We cannot allow people to forget his sacrifice for our country or our town.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“This young soldier who believed in his duty to our country should never be forgotten.”

Korean War Veteran (U.S. Navy)

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“As a resident of the Town of Suffield for all my life I would be proud to say that our local Post Office is named after one of our fallen heroes who gave his young life to protect others from harm. Steve in his quiet way touched many people in his short life and he deserves this honor so others may do as he did in the future.”

“He was a fine and respectful young man and his selfless service to his county and ultimate sacrifice warrant bestowing this honor.”

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“I was a good friend of Steve’s, having had the honor of being on the cross-country and track teams with him. He was one of the most determined, hard working people I have ever met, and he always had the same look of complete focus and fierce pride on his face. Every run was equally important to him, whether it was a solo cool-down run or a state championship meet. Even schoolwork and his Eagle Scout projects received the same

vivacious energy from Steve. He put one hundred percent into everything, including his relationships with friends and family members. Steve was the perfect example of a hero—an all-around wonderful person who could have truly changed the world had he had more time on this earth. Actually, he probably already changed us all more than we realize.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Suffield is a community that deeply values its history. When I went through the school system, there was a class at the middle school level dedicated to teaching the town’s youth about the people, places, and events in Suffield’s past. Corporal Bixler’s contribution to our community and our country is now part of that history and should be memorialized.

“Pride is another characteristic of the Suffield community. The town prides itself in its sense of community, schools, charity, and most importantly, its people. Everyone in Suffield may not have personally known Stephen Bixler when he was a student in the schools, but he made a name for himself in his academic and athletic achievements and was generally known as a “good kid”. When he became Corporal Bixler, his name reached a few more ears and sadly, when he was killed, his name became familiar to all. The pride and respect Suffield has for its fallen is evident each Memorial Day as hundreds of residents flood Veterans Memorial Park, and it would be so meaningful to rename the Post Office after Corporal Bixler to serve as a reminder of that pride the rest of the year.”

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“This small gesture would help permanently remember the sacrifice of Steve in a town where his presence was so greatly felt both before and after his unfortunate death. The day after our nation celebrated its freedom and independence, I ask you to help our community remember Steve’s sacrifice made in his efforts to extend our freedoms to others around the world.

“Steve was my best friend since we met in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, some nine years ago. I can tell you with confidence that renaming the Post Office with his name would portray to others in the community his devotion, hard work ethic, and love of our country that should be admired by all. Steve is truly a role model, for his sense of duty, loyalty, and ultimate sacrifice to the United States is something that should be remembered for generations to come.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Being a father of a soldier whom also served in Iraq, I believe that it would be an outstanding gesture not only to him, but to his family, friends, fellow soldiers and to the community itself. Our service men and women lay their lives on the line every day for a small paycheck and knowing a soldier as close as I do, a feeling that they made a

difference to not only their country, but to the citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is our duty as American citizens to pay thanks to our soldiers for their hard work and sacrifices in this war against terror.

“I did not know Cpl. Bixler, nor any of the other fallen in the war against terror...but my son has. Yes, he came home and is still serving in the U.S. Army and will do so for many years to come, however, some did not. So, I ask as a father of a soldier and a citizen of these United States... Give not only for the fallen, but the living should remember for what all soldiers have given- their time, unrewarded dedication, hard work, and the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.”

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“I graduated a year before Stephen Bixler and shared a class with him. He was quiet, but so sweet, and I think it would be a wonderful tribute if the Suffield Post Office was named after him.”

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“It’s the right thing to do...Lets honor this hero.”

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“Unless you experienced the days surrounding Stephen’s death and funeral, you cannot understand fully what these young men and women are truly sacrificing. Two days before Stephen, an Eagle Scout, was killed my son achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Stephen’s parents were there and my son gave them regards to send them off to Cpl. Bixler. The message would never reach him. Little did they know that Stephen’s achievement inspired my son to start and complete his project.

“The day that Stephen’s body arrived in Suffield thousands of residents lined the route of the hearse. Not a sound was heard except the muffled sobs of people. The next days are a blur. Boy Scout Honor guards at the wake as well as Marines. My son came bearing the Crucifix onto the church before the casket. This small town came together like we all come together after 9/11. This time though, it was personal.”

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“Steve was a fine young man and our whole community was deeply saddened by his tragic death in service to our country.”

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“I not only knew Steve from town, but I also had the great honor and privilege to serve with him in the Marine Corps. There is no greater honor than to serve in combat beside a man of such great character. Steve was a great man and an outstanding Marine, both in and out of uniform, and I am extremely proud of his sacrifice and his growth from a young Marine into an experienced veteran who would himself lead Marines.”

“Steve’s death took a great toll on our town and community and I strongly believe the least we can do is show out love and support by keeping his name and sacrifice alive. I can think of no better way to respect this great man, marine, and friend.”

Friend and fellow Marine of Cpl. Bixler

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“It’s a small gesture but one that would be greatly appreciated by his family. My brother was a boy scout in the same troop as he was. And my little sister went to school with him. Anything we can do to make it so people do not forget those who have fallen is great.”

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“I was fortunate enough to have been good friends with Corporal Stephen Bixler, Stephen was a great man and his death was a tremendous loss to the town of Suffield and to our nation as a whole.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“Stephen Bixler is a great example for all young people to emulate- both as a student leader and a heroic soldier.”

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“As a former Marine and an 18 year resident of Suffield, I am 100% in favor of honoring the memory of Steve Bixler by naming the Suffield Post Office after him. As you say, we can’t honor these guys enough. My daughter ran track with Steve and was a very good friend of his. I knew him as a result of visits to my home. He was an outstanding young man who exhibited all that is right and good and so often missing in today’s youth.”

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“I feel that renaming the Suffield Post Office after Stephen would be a lasting tribute and reminder to our community and those that should pass through our town what a wonderful young man that gave his life so we may enjoy the freedoms that we have in this country.”

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“I knew Stephen many years ago when he was a student at the Spaulding School. Shortly after his death, many books were purchased about Memorial Day for our school library and each book has a bookplate stating that these books are in his memory. I want Suffield children to remember this young man that one day went to their school and that he gave his life for our country.”

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“I went to high school with Bixler and I believe that the post office would without a doubt be named in his honor. It is the very least we can do to commemorate his service in our armed forces and his devotion to his country. It will keep his legacy alive so that people will always know the true Suffield hero who is Stephen Bixler.”

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“I graduated high school with Stephen and I know what an amazing person he was and always will be to us. He was always an asset to our community and I think naming a community building in his honor would be a great way to acknowledge that.”

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“Having known Cpl. Bixler I can state honestly that he was well deserving of this honor. He was kind hearted, humorous, and felt strongly about the cause for which he was fighting. He took great pride in everything that he had accomplished and was to accomplish in the future. I reveled in his enthusiasm for life. When he was taken on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 it felt as though time would stop. During the services people reminisced about Cpl. Bixler’s accomplishments and all of the love he felt in his heart. Even though he no longer in our lives in body, he lives on in soul. His spirit and memory touches everyone’s heart day after day. The town of Suffield has been honored to claim Cpl. Bixler as a native.”

Friend of Cpl. Bixler

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“I am a cousin of Stephen's and think it would be a great honor and memory for Stephen to renamed the Post Office after him. After he died I got a puppy (which Stephen always wanted a dog) and named him after Stephen, "Bixler". I remember Stephen everyday when saying my dogs name. Stephen gave his life to serve and protect and was well known in Suffield. What a great honor for Stephen and family having a memory of renaming the Post Office after him.”

A Cousin of Cpl. Bixler